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More 'Hits' For Tim McGraw; Billboard Alters Chart Week

Tim McGraw collects his eighth charted best-of album on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums list, as *35 Biggest Hits* bows at No. 8 with 8,000 sold, according to Nielsen Music. It's the latest hits retrospective released by McGraw's former label, Curb Records, and his 10th charted compilation on Curb. In addition to the eight hits packages, Curb has also issued a love songs-themed set, *Love Story*, and a collaborations project, *Tim McGraw & Friends*. Thus, nearly half of McGraw's 22 charted albums are Curb compilations.

Despite its *35 Biggest Hits* title, the new set contains a 36th song: bonus track "Just When I Needed You Most," a live cover of **Randy VanWarmer's** No. 4-peaking 1979 *Billboard* Hot 100 hit.

McGraw's two most recent Top Country Albums No. 1s (his 14th and 15th on the list) were released on his current label, Big Machine: 2012's *Emotional Traffic* and 2014's *Sundown Heaven Town*. The latter effort's "Shotgun Rider" became his 25th No. 1 on Hot Country Songs in December 2014.

Speaking of Hot Country Songs, quartet **Little Big Town's** "Girl Crush" nears history, as it rules the chart for a ninth week. The reign is the longest by a group (of at least three members) in nearly 56 years, with only one song by a group having led longer: trio **The Browns'** "The Three Bells" (10 weeks, 1959). As previously reported, "Crush" has benefited from the buzz of its

lyrics, which center on a woman jealous of another woman's desirability. It leads Country Digital Songs for a ninth week (73,000 downloads sold, up 6 percent), and has sold 1.3 million to date.

McGRAW



CHART CHANGES: In response to the IFPI's global release date announcement, *Billboard* and Nielsen Music will adjust the tracking weeks for most *Billboard* charts. The changes affect the tabulation schedule for rankings including the *Billboard* 200, *Billboard* Hot 100, Top Country Albums and Hot Country Songs. Starting July 10, the official street date for all new album releases will be Friday (instead of the current Tuesday) in the United States. For all sales-based charts (ranking both albums and tracks),

Billboard and Nielsen Music will cover an adjusted sales period of Friday to Thursday, as opposed to the Monday-to-Sunday cycle that has been utilized since the advent of Nielsen Music's point-of-sales tracking in 1991. For a complete overview of changes, go to Billboard.com/globalreleasedate.

This column was written by Billboard co-directors of charts Keith Caulfield (keith.caulfield@billboard.com) and Gary Trust (gary.trust@billboard.com). Additional reporting by Billboard country/Christian/gospel chart manager Jim Asker (jim.asker@billboard.com). ●

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MAKIN' TRACKS TOM ROLAND tom.roland@billboard.com

Keith Urban's 'John Cougar' A Symbolic Flashback



When **Keith Urban** performed with **John Mellencamp** during the May 21 NBC special *Red Nose Day*, he decided against telling Mellencamp about his next single. "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16" hinges in part on the stage name that a former manager stamped on Mellencamp's first albums, and it's been a point of contention in his career.

"He's obviously got mixed feelings on the name **John Cougar**," allows Urban. "I didn't really want to get into all that."

The journey from Cougar to Mellencamp symbolized the artist's struggle to define and honor his own identity. Self-definition is part of everyone's life path—whether it's recognized or not—and it's at the root of the "John" song's journey, too. Identifying what was in it was a struggle and finding the best way to express it became a separate puzzle.

One thing about it: The artistic destination for "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16" was sealed barely a week after the song's conception. Urban sang it live for the first time on Feb. 25 at the Ryman Auditorium during Country Radio Seminar. He didn't know until before hitting the stage that he was going to play it, and didn't even know if he could remember all the lyrics.

"Maybe two days later, somebody sent me a YouTube link, and that's the first time I actually heard the crowd react to the end of the first chorus," recalls Urban. "I thought, 'Oh, that's a good sign. It's sort of like the punch line landed and they laughed.' It connected in the way I hoped it would, so I think that's probably what had all of us start thinking maybe that's the first song we should get in the studio and work on."

Songwriter **Ross Copperman** ("Smoke," "Beat of the Music") provided the foundation for "John Cougar," a rootsy track he had built around acoustic guitar patterns before a songwriting session with **Shane McAnally** ("American Kids," "Wild Child") and **Josh Osborne** ("Merry Go 'Round," "Take Your Time"). Copperman had pieces of the melody in place, but didn't know what direction the lyrics needed to take. They quickly settled on a nostalgic vein for a generation McAnally dubs "the MTV-era kids."

"All of the writers that I write with come from that small-town place where we didn't have a lot, but it seemed like we had a lot because we had all we needed," says McAnally.

Osborne's father had bought him an old-school gramophone after "Merry Go 'Round" became a hit for **Kacey Musgraves**, and a reference to that machine kicked off the first-verse romp down memory lane, building a story through such images as **John Wayne**, Pepsi-Cola and **Don McLean**'s "American Pie." More ideas piled up in the chorus, including a reference to "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams" (a painting that features **James Dean** and **Elvis Presley**—not the **Green Day** song) and a line about "**Marilyn Monroe** and the Garden of Eden."

"I don't exactly know what that line means, but that's my favorite line in the whole song," offers Osborne.

It didn't come easy, and at one point, they considered abandoning the song. But when "John Cougar" spilled out at the end of the chorus, it led to a jag where they tied in some other "John" references, and they realized they were creating a song with some lyrical weight.

"John Cougar references all the sort of sexual tension of teenage angst all of

us were growing up in," says McAnally. "John Deere represents the way that our parents worked and what we saw living in the country, and of course [there's] the element of religion. And [there's] irony in John Cougar starting the line, and John 3:16 ending the line because that was the push and pull of that teenage thing."

The craft part of songwriting took over as they supported the John Deere piece with country images in verse two and stuffed the John 3:16 religious background into the bridge. A demo was completed that day, and they soon picked Urban as a target for the song. McAnally sent him the demo, and within days, Urban visited Copperman to sing on top of the tracks. "I think he just wanted to hear himself sing it and see how he sounded on the song," says Copperman.

Urban subsequently gave the Ryman performance, which publicly marked it as his song. But turning it into a recording was difficult, especially because Urban aspired to do something that wasn't just copying the sound he had already established. He enlisted drummer **Matt Chamberlain** to create a loop and started building the song around drums, vocal and acoustic guitar. He thought it was too predictable, so he tried electric, to no avail. Then he pulled a bass off the wall at Blackbird Studios and laid down a pinging line to show a studio bassist who arrived later that day.

"Keith doesn't play bass all the time, but he's such an intuitive musician," says producer **Dann Huff** (**Rascal Flatts**, **The Band Perry**). "He played it with such a different take, unlike any

bass player would do it. I felt bad for the bass player. He came in and heard it and was like, 'What's wrong with that?' And the answer was, 'There's nothing wrong with it.'"

Urban also created a four-note guitar pattern that sort of answers the vocal—"It's kind of calypso, almost reggae-ish," he says—and a track on a **Kendrick Lamar** album inspired him to build in a key change. But it wasn't just a standard modulation up; he wanted to return to the original key before the song ended.

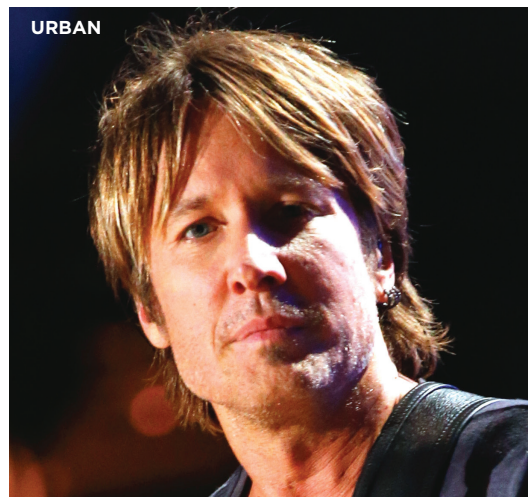
"The trick with going back was that it almost never works because it's anti-climatic," says Urban. "You can't lift everything up and then drop it back down and think it's going to hold the energy, so it took us forever to figure out how to do it."

Urban also grafted on a spacious guitar solo that uses a tone and wah-pedal fuzziness inspired by the **Steve Miller Band** pop single "The Joker." To top it off, he did multiple vocal recordings in Nashville, Los Angeles and Australia as he hopped continents in the middle of *American Idol* tapings. Each time, he got a little closer to the emotional center of "John Cougar."

"Some songs, you just wear 'em around like a squeaky leather jacket," says Urban. "It just takes a while for it to feel loose, and just to feel right."

Capitol Nashville released "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16" to radio June 9, and Urban performed it the next day on the CMT Music Awards. It's No. 24 in its second week on Country Airplay and No. 25 in its third week on Hot Country Songs. Whether people are responding to the nostalgia or the struggle it represents, they're clearly drawn to "John Cougar," the song and the icon, who made America real to a kid growing up Down Under.

"His songwriting was such a huge part of my life," says Urban. "I almost feel like between all the TV I grew up with in Australia and John Mellencamp's music—among many others—I knew what it meant to live there and grow up there." ●



PROMOTION



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NASHVILLE POWER PLAYERS

Who are the top power players in Nashville?

This issue of *Billboard* will uncover the leaders in Nashville's music scene with a cover story package on contemporary country music. This feature will include a ranked power list of the 50 most important music executives in Nashville, plus a photo portfolio featuring the top artists, songwriters, musicians, publicists, power couples and more.

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Talking 'Change': Group Advocates Empowering Women



An assortment of Nashville music industry executives have united with an unusual long-term goal: making their own group obsolete.

The collective's name also spells out another of its key goals: Change the Conversation — specifically, the ongoing discussion about why female artists have long faced a significantly more difficult struggle than male artists in country music.

Change the Conversation has quickly caught on since it began in late 2014 as a discussion among the group's three well-credentialed founders: CMT senior vp music strategy **Leslie Fram**, who founded the network's successful Next Women of Country franchise; artist manager and Rounder Records vp A&R **Tracy Gershon**; and Middle Tennessee State University recording industry department chair and *The Tennessean* columnist **Beverly Keel**.

The group is open to all, and its meetings have been rapidly growing in size. The first get-together, in January, was at Keel's home; the second was held at Black River Entertainment on Music Row; and the third, at Creative Artist Agency's Nashville penthouse, was attended by more than 50 people. The fourth, set for June 30, will move to a Gulch-area restaurant. Attendees at the most recent meeting included artists, managers, agents, record-label executives, songwriters and more. Although just two men attended that gathering, Music Row's male executives are being actively encouraged to participate. As word has gotten out, businesses like City National Bank are coming forward to ask about sponsoring meetings.

The founders say that during meetings, complaining is discouraged. Instead, they are focusing on sharing information, debunking myths, commissioning research and working toward real-world solutions. Fram says attendees, particularly the artists, have found the meetings to be "a safe environment to ask questions and speak freely."

Says Gershon, "Everybody's so busy they don't need another wine-and-cheese event. We want to make it productive so people walk out feeling informed and empowered, and like they can actually make a change."

According to Keel, the group's goals include helping more women get record-label and publishing deals, encouraging songwriters to write more songs for women — something many say they are being actively discouraged from doing since it's so much harder to get those songs cut — getting more women artists played on country radio, getting more female acts booked on the main stages during CMA Music Fest and other high-profile events, and providing mentoring opportunities for women in country music.

Fram says the group is also working toward developing research and "talking points that people can use to dispel myths that are out there, [like] women don't want to hear women and you can't play two women back to back on the radio."

Offering an example of the work they are trying to accomplish, Gershon says that at one meeting, "We asked people what their biggest problems [were], and

[an agent] said, 'Sometimes when we book women in clubs the club owners don't feel like they can sell enough beer.' So that becomes something we have to track down to see if it's true ... and answer, intelligently, some of the stuff that comes up."

The group is also encouraging female artists and writers to root for one another in an environment where, says Gershon, in the past they have been pitted against each other and made to feel competitive because they're repeatedly told there is just one spot at a time for women artists. "We're really preaching the fact that a win for any of us is a win ... so support each other."

But the founders are quick to recognize that not every woman artist has superstar potential. Says Gershon, "It's not that we're saying every woman needs to be played on the radio. We're just saying they shouldn't *not* be played because they're women." Agrees Fram, "It shouldn't be that

there are only so many slots for women. It should be about the best music."

The group was already nearly 6 months old when radio consultant **Keith Hill** inadvertently threw a lit match into the room in May with his comments about how his clients that play 15 percent female artists or fewer perform better in the ratings, and referring to female artists as the "tomatoes" of the country programming "salad."

Those comments were published the day before the third meeting, and wound up galvanizing an already highly motivated group. Keel calls it "a beautifully wrapped gift," and

Gershon says that at that third meeting, "The energy in the room was unbelievable. I almost felt like people were going to levitate."

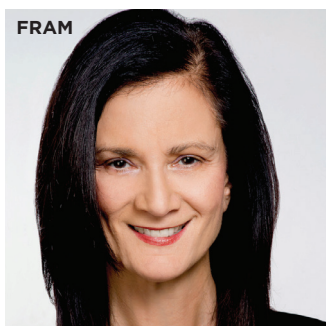
Six months in, the group's founders feel like Change the Conversation is already having an impact on Music Row. "It turned people from feeling helpless to hopeful," says Keel. "Before, we all worried about it, felt bad about it, but felt we were alone and didn't have any power. When we've come together, we have the power of our voices to spotlight the problem, fight it and come up with solutions. We're not just sitting around complaining and expecting somebody else to fix it. We're taking responsibility ourselves to improve the situation."

"The more we talk about it, the more it's in the universe, and I feel it changing a little bit," says Gershon.

Adds Fram, "Change the Conversation has started a conversation. It is a safe place for artists and writers to come and ask questions. It's been very positive in that respect."

But Keel notes the group is taking a long-term view. "This isn't about us," she says. "This is about the young generation of girls who are dreaming about working in the country music industry. We want to improve the situation for them so that they're not still battling myths 10 or 15 years from now. We want to leave it better than we found it."

Adds Gershon, "Our long-term goal is to not have to have this conversation anymore." ●



FRAM



GERSHON



KEEL



QUESTIONS Answered

Storme Warren

Morning host, *The Highway*, SiriusXM
[@stormewarren](#)



WARREN/PARKER YOUNG

Since former SiriusXM programmer Jon Anthony brought him into the fold in the late 2000s, Storme Warren has transitioned nicely from a longtime role as the host of GAC's *Headline Country* to the host of the morning show on contemporary country channel *The Highway*. It's actually something of a return to the radio fold for Warren, who was a board operator and air personality in his teens. While his primary role is on-air, Warren has fed a little music into the system, helping get records by Ryan Kinder, David Fanning and Old Southern Moonshine Revival onto the playlist.

You have become the public face of *The Highway*. How does that fit with what you wanted to do with your life? Radio was always my first love. I started way back in 1983 in Tulsa [Okla.], and then my focus turned to entertainment news reporting for CNN and *Showbiz Today*, and then on to *TNN Country News* and *This Week in Country Music* and all that stuff for Jim Owens and Crook & Chase. I thought radio was done for me, but in the back of my mind, it was like, "Geez, it'd be so good to be a part of that again."

What did you study at Cal State-Northridge? I started in radio, TV and film because I was working at Pirate Radio in Los Angeles and CNN in Los Angeles all through college. But being a rather cocky freshman or sophomore, thinking I'm learning more on the job than I am at school, I got frustrated with the classes and changed majors to leisure study and recreation.

That sounds like you just quit. No. Actually, I found a program

called *Wilderness Survival*, and it was the most amazing two-and-half-years of my life. The program is developed to get kids off of academic probation, and it had a 99.9 percent success rate by bringing kids ... to the woods, bringing them up to the Sierra Mountains for a couple of three-day trips during the semester and a summer trip of nine days. I kept repeating the course because I enjoyed the work so much that I became almost an adjunct professor. It changed my life. What I learned in that course I've taken with me in every aspect — it's not afraid of falling, approaching your fears head on, confidence. If you want to just go out and hug a tree and trust yourself in the woods, you'd be amazed at how much stronger you become as a person.

When you jump into the business you're in now, and every small detail is the most important thing in the world, that probably has kept you grounded in a really odd business ... It is a very odd business, and you're surrounded by insecurities. And it's very easy when you're in the public eye to cripple yourself by the nuts and bolts of what you think you have to do on a second-by-second basis trying to entertain an entire continent every morning. But what you learn: Don't stress the small stuff. And don't stress the big stuff, either. Whatever's going to happen is going to happen, and it's [about] how you react to it and prepare for it, as opposed to freaking out over what does go wrong.

How do you manage to sound upbeat on the air all the time? At the root of it all, I like being happy more than I like being upset, sad, angry, bitter. Happy just feels better. That's always been the case. From the time that I was a kid, my parents tell a story that I woke up every morning, whether I had a poopy diaper or whatever, I'd be standing up in the crib with a big smile on my face going, "Hi!" It's kind of carried through, and I like it. I do my best to keep the negativity away from my life as much as I can.

I understand that you're now making some of the music choices on *The Highway*. How extensive is that? Not very extensive. I am proud to say that I have brought some music to the table. John Marks is our program director. He makes the decisions. But ... we do have that mutual respect, where if I do find something that I believe is *Highway*-worthy, there's an open channel, where he'll take the time to listen. And I also have the respect for him that I'm not just going to shoot him a new band or a new artist every day. I'm going to weed out the ones that I think are truly going to make an impact. —Tom Roland

MIDWEEK NEWS UPDATE

OUTDOOR CHANNEL'S COUNTRY SUMMER



MORGAN: BILL KONWAY

Craig Morgan: *All Access Outdoors* is returning for a sixth season, beginning July 5 on the Outdoor Channel. The episodes' activities include king salmon fishing, rafting in Alaska and an African safari. Meanwhile, **Luke Bryan** and **Jason Aldean** will appear with *Duck Dynasty*'s **Willie Robertson** in an installment of *Buck Commander*, **Zac Brown** shows up on *Red Arrow*, and **Rascal**

Flatts' Gary LeVox is on tap for *Drury's Thirteenth*.

With **Kacey Musgraves'** *Pageant Material* released this week, Musgraves has set Aug. 27 as the launch date for a 20-show tour, the Kacey Musgraves Country & Western Rhinestone Revue. The itinerary includes a Sept. 23 stop

at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium and an Oct. 24 engagement at New York's Apollo Theater. Musgraves will also play the Royal Albert Hall in London on Nov. 18 during an eight-show sweep of Europe that concludes Nov. 22 in The Netherlands.

Singer-songwriter **Kris Kristofferson**, **Charley Pride**, manager **Jim Halsey** (**Oak Ridge Boys**, **Roy Clark**) and late producer-director **Sherman Halsey** will be recognized for their contributions to American culture during the 32nd annual American Eagle Awards, presented by the National Music Council. The awards will take place in Nashville for the first time.

Less than a year after his passing, Grand Ole Opry member **George Hamilton IV** is likely to have his name affixed to a bridge in his native Winston-Salem, N.C. Forsyth County commissioners approved a plan to rename an overpass as the George Hamilton IV Bridge, according to *The Winston-Salem Journal*. The state's transportation board will make the final decision. ●

billboard Hot Country Songs

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY **nielsen MUSIC**


THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	CERTIFIED	PEAK POSITION
1	1	1	29	GIRL CRUSH J. JOYCE (L. ROSE, L. MCKENNA, H. LINDSEY) ★★No. 1 (9 weeks)/Digital Gainer★★	Little Big Town CAPITOL NASHVILLE	■	1
2	2	2	34	TAKE YOUR TIME Z. CROWELL, S. MCANALLY (S. HUNT, J. OSBORNE, S. MCANALLY)	Sam Hunt MCA NASHVILLE	■	1
3	3	4	6	KICK THE DUST UP J. STEVENS, J. STEVENS (D. DAVIDSON, C. DESTEFANO, A. GORLEY)	Luke Bryan CAPITOL NASHVILLE		2
4	4	3	14	SANGRIA S. HENDRICKS (J. T. HARDING, J. OSBORNE, T. ROSEN)	Blake Shelton WARNER BROS./WMN		3
5	5	7	30	LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT F.G. WHITEHEAD (K. BALLERINI, J. KERR, F.G. WHITEHEAD, L. CARPENTER)	Kelsea Ballerini BLACK RIVER		5
6	6	8	22	LITTLE TOY GUNS M. BRIGHT (C. UNDERWOOD, C. DESTEFANO, H. LINDSEY)	Carrie Underwood 19/ARISTA NASHVILLE		6
7	9	14	16	TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU M. KNOX (D. DAVIDSON, R. AKINS, A. GORLEY)	Jason Aldean BROKEN BOW		7
8	16	22	26	HOUSE PARTY Z. CROWELL, S. MCANALLY (S. HUNT, Z. CROWELL, J. FLOWERS)	Sam Hunt MCA NASHVILLE		8
9	8	13	18	LIKE A WRECKING BALL J. JOYCE (E. CHURCH, C. BEATHARD)	Eric Church EMI NASHVILLE		8
10	11	11	38	LOVE YOU LIKE THAT B. BEAVERS, J. ROBBINS (C. SMITH, B. BEAVERS, J. BEAVERS)	Canaan Smith MERCURY	●	10
11	15	16	21	DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOLS B. GALLIMORE, T. MCGRAW (L. LAIRD, B. DEAN, J. SINGLETON)	Tim McGraw With Catherine Dunn MCGRAW/BIG MACHINE		11
12	12	15	11	CRASH AND BURN D. HUFF, J. FRASURE (J. FRASURE, C. STAPLETON)	Thomas Rhett VALORY		12
13	13	12	33	BABY BE MY LOVE SONG C. CHAMBERLAIN (J. COLLINS, BRETT JAMES)	Easton Corbin MERCURY		12
14	7	5	21	SIPPIN' ON FIRE J. MOI (R. CLAWSON, M. DRAGSTREM, C. TAYLOR)	Florida Georgia Line REPUBLIC NASHVILLE	●	3
15	17	21	9	BUY ME A BOAT C. JANSON, C. DUBOIS, B. ANDERSON (C. JANSON, C. DUBOIS)	Chris Janson WARNER BROS./WAR		15
16	19	19	9	LOVING YOU EASY Z. BROWN (Z. BROWN, N. MOON, A. ANDERSON)	Zac Brown Band JOHN VARVATOS/REPUBLIC/BMLG/SOUTHERN GROUND		16
17	18	17	25	ONE HELL OF AN AMEN D. HUFF (B. GILBERT, M. DEKLE, B. DAVIS)	Brantley Gilbert VALORY		14
18	10	9	20	WILD CHILD B. CANNON, K. CHESNEY (K. CHESNEY, S. MCANALLY, J. OSBORNE)	Kenny Chesney With Grace Potter BLUE CHAIR/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE		9
19	21	20	20	CRUSHIN' IT L. WOOTEN, B. PAISLEY (B. PAISLEY, K. LOVELAKE, L. T. MILLER)	Brad Paisley ARISTA NASHVILLE		19
20	14	10	24	SMOKE D. COBB (M. HOBBY, J. M. NITE, R. COPPERMAN)	A Thousand Horses REPUBLIC NASHVILLE		5
21	20	18	24	HOMEGROWN J. JOYCE, Z. BROWN (Z. BROWN, W. DURRETTE, N. MOON)	Zac Brown Band JOHN VARVATOS/REPUBLIC/BMLG/SOUTHERN GROUND		2
22	22	23	15	KISS YOU IN THE MORNING S. HENDRICKS (J. WILSON, M. WHITE)	Michael Ray WARNER BROS./WEA		22
23	23	24	17	YOUNG & CRAZY M. ALTMAN, S. HENDRICKS (A. GORLEY, S. MCANALLY, R. AKINS)	Frankie Ballard WARNER BROS./WAR		21
24	25	25	24	HELL OF A NIGHT M. J. CONES (Z. CROWELL, A. SANDERS, J. BOYER)	Dustin Lynch BROKEN BOW		24
25	24	47	3	JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16 D. HUFF, K. URBAN (S. MCANALLY, R. COPPERMAN, J. OSBORNE) ★★Airplay & Streaming Gainer★★	Keith Urban HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE		24



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INSIDE Austin Management Firm 'Trio & Ambiance' Merge
Vince Gill, Eric Burdon, Harris Roddenie 'Hall of Fame' Benefit
Randy Houser Finds Out How No. 1 Feels
George Strait Still Packs 'Em In
Lady A Underwood Prep For CMA Fest
Cumulus Brings Country To New York, Strengthens It Beyond City Limits
When WWSN took to the air on Monday, it marked the return of country music to terrestrial radio in the nation's largest market after an absence of more than a decade. It was a big deal in terms of its local impact, but just as important is how it benefits country nationally. The station, which will adopt WWSN (94.3 FM) as its primary call letters, will become the flagship for a Nash brand that Cumulus will roll out in numerous forms of live news media, including radio stations in other markets, plus a magazine, Web presence and planned live events and cable TV. That it also likely to have a positive effect on country's impact in other media. The great immediately become more visible in a marketplace where hundreds of national companies make decisions daily about how they will spend their money and what celebrities they might affiliate with. The complete Nash branding package is "not something that will appear and happen magically tomorrow." Cumulus CEO **Casey Dickson** says "that over the course of time, all of these different pieces will come and fit snugly together, and I think what you're going to see is the outline of what's going to be a tapestry serving country and that life going to be a significant one." Questions about the makeup of WWSN remain. No PD or music director has been named yet, and the station initially aired without live personalities, being limited to pre-produced hours being by "America's country station." The air staff and programming executives will be announced "sometime this fall." Dickson promises. The WWSN playlist was, he said, based on market-driven research. The first-hour mixed current singles (**Brad Paisley's** "Southern Comfort Zone," **Lee Brice's** "I Drive Your Truck") with classic country from the 1960s (**Band's** "Fire," **Lady Antebellum's** "Run to You") and classic country from the 1990s (**Garth Brooks'** "Friends in Low Places," **George Strait's** "Bite This One"). Also heard, somewhat surprisingly, during the first day was **Bobby Rogers Band's** "Too Late for Goodbye," which peaked at No. 47 on Hot Country Songs in 2008 but faded before the "Texas red-dirt circuit." If that was indeed chosen because of research and not just because it was a gift-in-kind from Cumulus' Dallas station (Dickson said WWSN was not an adaptation of another city's library, but suggests the station could be a trendsetter, and not simply a jockey of proven hits. "They're pretty conservative as chains go, so I wouldn't expect them to be super-aggressive, but something covered by radio here for them, they may pop on something earlier," Dickson

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billboard Hot Country Songs

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	CERTIFIED	PEAK POSITION
26	26	30	9	LOSE MY MIND R. COPPERMAN, B. ELDREDGE (B. ELDREDGE, H. MORGAN, R. COPPERMAN, B. BURTON, T. D. CALLAWAY, G. F. REVERBERI, G. P. REVERBERI)	Brett Eldredge ATLANTIC/WMN		26
27	29	27	24	RIOT J. DEMARCUS, RASCAL FLATTS (J. BOYER, S. HAZE)	Rascal Flatts BIG MACHINE		27
28	28	35	4	REAL LIFE S. MCANALLY, R. COPPERMAN (R. COPPERMAN, A. GORLEY, S. MCANALLY, J. OSBORNE)	Jake Owen RCA NASHVILLE		27
29	31	33	15	BREAK UP WITH HIM S. MCANALLY (M. RAMSEY, T. ROSEN, B. TURI, G. SPRUNG, W. SELLERS)	Old Dominion RCA NASHVILLE		29
30	30	31	18	FLY D. HUFF (M. MARLOW, T. DYE, T. VARTANYAN)	Maddie & Tae DOT		30
31	32	29	6	I'M COMIN' OVER C. CROWDER, C. YOUNG (C. YOUNG, C. CROWDER, J. HOGUE)	Chris Young RCA NASHVILLE		8
32	27	26	17	GAMES J. STEVENS (L. BRYAN, A. GORLEY)	Luke Bryan CAPITOL NASHVILLE		21
33	33	32	5	21 D. HUFF, H. HAYES (D. DAVIDSON, K. LOVELACE, A. GORLEY, H. HAYES)	Hunter Hayes ATLANTIC/WMN		30
34	35	36	18	I GOT THE BOY S. HENDRICKS (T. NICHOLS, C. HARRINGTON, J. L. SPEARS)	Jana Kramer ELEKTRA NASHVILLE/WAR		31
35	37	37	10	LET ME SEE YA GIRL M. CARTER (C. SWINDELL, M. CARTER, J. STEVENS)	Cole Swindell WARNER BROS./WMN		35
36	36	34	20	I'M TO BLAME B. JAMES (K. MOORE, J. WEAVER, W. DAVIS)	Kip Moore MCA NASHVILLE		31
37	34	38	24	GOING OUT LIKE THAT T. BROWN (B. HAYS, L. P. AKINS, J. SELLERS)	Reba STARSTRUCK/NASH ICON/VALORY		23
38	39	40	12	NOTHIN' LIKE YOU C. DESTEFANO (D. SMYERS, S. MOONEY, A. GORLEY, C. DESTEFANO)	Dan + Shay WARNER BROS./WAR		38
39	38	39	24	GONNA WANNA TONIGHT C. DESTEFANO (S. MCANALLY, J. M. NITE, J. ROBBINS)	Chase Rice DACK JANIELS/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE		34
40	42	-	8	ANYTHING GOES J. MOI (F. MCTEIGUE, C. G. TOMPKINS, C. WISEMAN)	Florida Georgia Line REPUBLIC NASHVILLE		19
41	41	41	11	STAY A LITTLE LONGER J. JOYCE (J. OSBORNE, T. J. OSBORNE, S. MCANALLY)	Brothers Osborne EMI NASHVILLE		41
42	40	43	14	BISCUITS K. MUSGRAVES, L. LAIRD, S. MCANALLY (K. MUSGRAVES, S. MCANALLY, B. CLARK)	Kacey Musgraves MERCURY		28
43	44	42	11	ALREADY CALLIN' YOU MINE N.V. (M. THOMAS, S. THOMAS, B. KNOX, P. O'DONNELL, W. KIRBY)	Pamalee STONEY CREEK		42
44	43	-	2	BURNING HOUSE J. BHASKER, T. JOHNSON (C. OCHS, T. JOHNSON, J. BHASKER)	Cam ARISTA NASHVILLE		43
45	50	-	2	WHERE IT ALL BEGINS D. HUFF, H. HAYES (H. HAYES, C. KELLEY, D. HAYWOOD, H. SCOTT)	Hunter Hayes Featuring Lady Antebellum ATLANTIC/WMN		45
46	NEW	1	1	HURRICANE NOT LISTED (NOT LISTED) **Hot Shot Debut**	Luke Combs LUKE COMBS		46
47	46	49	5	I LOVE THIS LIFE L. RIMES, P. BRUST, C. LUCAS (D. MYRICK, C. JANSON, C. LUCAS, P. BRUST)	LoCash REVIVER		46
48	47	46	16	RIDE C. DESTEFANO (J. SOMERS-MORALES, D. C. TARPLEY JR.)	Chase Rice DACK JANIELS/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE		38
49	48	50	3	COUNTRY T. BROWN (M. PITNEY, B. TOMBERLIN, B. ANDERSON)	Mo Pitney CURB		48
50	NEW	1	1	ALL COUNTRY ON YOU B. GALLIMORE (J. KEAR, MARK IRWIN, C. G. TOMPKINS)	Austin Webb STREAMSOUND		50

The week's most popular country songs, ranked by radio airplay audience impressions as measured by Nielsen Music, sales data as compiled by Nielsen Music and streaming activity data from online music sources tracked by Nielsen Music. Descending titles below No. 25 are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks.

COUNTRY MARKET WATCH

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

YEAR-TO-DATE

Year-Over-Year Album Sales	
'14	14.8 million
'15	12.8 million
DIGITAL TRACKS SALES	
'14	69.3 million
'15	58.2 million

For week ending Month TK, 2015. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen Music.



Weekly Unit Sales			
	ALBUMS	DIGITAL ALBUMS*	DIGITAL TRACKS
This Week	556,000	172,000	2,480,000
Last Week	529,000	186,000	2,527,000
Change	5.1%	-7.5%	-1.9%
This Week Last Year	573,000	186,000	2,841,000
Change	-3.0%	-7.5%	-12.7%

*Digital album sales are also counted within album sales.

Overall Unit Sales			
	2014	2015	CHANGE
Albums	14,794,000	12,807,000	-13.4%
Digital Tracks	69,364,000	58,242,000	-16.0%
Sales by Album Format			
	2014	2015	CHANGE
Physical	9,752,000	8,075,000	9.0%
Digital	5,042,000	4,731,000	-6.2%

For inquiries about any Nielsen Music data, please contact Josh Bennett at 615-807-1338 or josh.bennett@nielsen.com

billboard TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA
COMPILED BY
nielsen MUSIC

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	ARTIST	Title	CERT.	PEAK POSITION
1	2	8	ZAC BROWN BAND	JEKYLL + HYDE		1
2	1	2	VARIOUS ARTISTS	NOW That's What I Call Country, Volume 8		1
3	4	34	SAM HUNT	Montevallo	●	1
4	5	3	WILLIE NELSON / MERLE HAGGARD	Django And Jimmie		1
5	8	35	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Pain Killer		3
6	7	71	ERIC CHURCH	The Outsiders	■	1
7	6	57	BRANTLEY GILBERT	Just As I Am	●	1
8	NEW	1	TIM MCGRAW	35 Biggest Hits		8
9	10	37	JASON ALDEAN	Old Boots, New Dirt	■	1
10	11	36	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Anything Goes	●	1
11	3	2	A THOUSAND HORSES	Southernality		3
12	NEW	1	BIG SMO	Bringin It Home (EP)		12
13	12	15	LUKE BRYAN	Spring Break... Checkin' Out		1
14	9	3	BILLY CURRINGTON	Summer Forever		3
15	14	98	LUKE BRYAN	Crash My Party	2	1
16	NEW	1	HANK WILLIAMS JR.	35 Biggest Hits		16
17	19	12	DARIUS RUCKER	Southern Style		1
18	17	28	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Greatest Hits: Decade #1	●	1
19	15	4	THE LACS	Outlaw In Me		3
20	22	39	KENNY CHESNEY	The Big Revival		1
21	21	38	BLAKE SHELTON	BRINGING BACK THE SUNSHINE	●	1
22	18	10	REBA	Love Somebody		1
23	23	8	TYLER FARR	Suffer In Peace		2
24	20	44	CHASE RICE	Ignite The Night		1
25	16	5	KELSEA BALLERINI	The First Time		4

The week's most popular country albums, ranked by sales data as compiled by Nielsen Music. Albums are defined as current if they are less than 18 months old or older than 18 months but still residing in the Billboard 200's top 100. Charts update weekly on Thursdays at www.Billboard.Biz/charts. Copyright 2015, Prometheus Global Media, LLC and Nielsen Music, Inc. All rights reserved.

billboard COUNTRY STREAMING SONGS

STREAMING DATA
COMPILED BY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE	ARTIST	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE	ARTIST
1	1	25	TAKE YOUR TIME	SAM HUNT	11	14	4	21	HUNTER HAYES
2	2	17	GIRL CRUSH	LITTLE BIG TOWN	12	16	9	LITTLE TOY GUNS	CARRIE UNDERWOOD
3	3	4	KICK THE DUST UP	LUKE BRYAN	13	12	116	CRUISE	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
4	4	13	SIPPIN' ON FIRE	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	14	8	69	THIS IS HOW WE ROLL	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. LUKE BRYAN
5	15	4	HOUSE PARTY	SAM HUNT	15	9	78	BOTTOMS UP	BRANTLEY GILBERT
6	5	11	LIKE A WRECKING BALL	ERIC CHURCH	16	19	5	LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT	KELSEA BALLERINI
7	7	6	CRASH AND BURN	THOMAS RHETT	17	20	4	WILD CHILD	KENNY CHESNEY WITH GRACE POTTER
8	6	13	DON'T IT	BILLY CURRINGTON	18	10	65	PLAY IT AGAIN	LUKE BRYAN
9	13	6	SANGRIA	BLAKE SHELTON	19	17	18	HOMEGROWN	ZAC BROWN BAND
10	11	52	LEAVE THE NIGHT ON	SAM HUNT	20	22	75	YOU BELONG WITH ME	TAYLOR SWIFT

Country Streaming Songs -The week's top Country streamed radio songs, on-demand songs and videos on leading online music services. Charts update weekly on Thursdays at www.Billboard.Biz/charts. Copyright 2015, Prometheus Global Media, LLC and Nielsen Music, Inc. All rights reserved.

billboard COUNTRY DIGITAL SONGS

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE	ARTIST (IMPRINT/LABEL)	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE	ARTIST (IMPRINT/LABEL)
1	2	26	GIRL CRUSH	LITTLE BIG TOWN (Capitol Nashville/UMGN)	26	NEW		HURRICANE	LUKE COMBS (Luke Combs)
2	1	5	KICK THE DUST UP	LUKE BRYAN (Capitol Nashville/UMGN)	27	31	5	HELL OF A NIGHT	DUSTIN LYNCHE (Broken Bow/BMG)
3	3	34	TAKE YOUR TIME	SAM HUNT (MCA Nashville/UMGN)	28	21	19	DON'T IT	BILLY CURRINGTON (Mercury/UMGN)
4	4	12	SANGRIA	BLAKE SHELTON (Warner Bros./WMN)	29	29	13	CRUSHIN' IT	BRAD PAISLEY (Arista Nashville/SMN)
5	5	19	LIKE A WRECKING BALL	ERIC CHURCH (EMI Nashville/UMGN)	30	40	10	RIOT	RASCAL FLATTS (Big Machine/BMLG)
6	9	12	HOUSE PARTY	SAM HUNT (MCA Nashville/UMGN)	31	30	17	WILD CHILD	KENNY CHESNEY WITH GRACE POTTER (Blue Chair/Columbia Nashville/SMN)
7	8	11	CRASH AND BURN	THOMAS RHETT (Valory/BMLG)	32	35	5	ANYTHING GOES	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE (Republic Nashville/BMLG)
8	6	9	BUY ME A BOAT	CHRIS JANSON (Warner Bros./WMN)	33	28	17	GAMES	LUKE BRYAN (Capitol Nashville/UMGN)
9	10	14	TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU	JASON ALDEAN (Broken Bow/BMG)	34	34	18	I GOT THE BOY	JANA KRAMER (Elektra Nashville/WMN)
10	13	34	LOVE YOU LIKE THAT	CANAAN SMITH (Mercury/UMGN)	35	32	54	BOTTOMS UP	BRANTLEY GILBERT (Valory/BMLG)
11	11	19	LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT	KELSEA BALLERINI (Black River)	36	27	2	BURNING HOUSE	CAM (Arista Nashville/SMN)
12	7	2	JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16	KEITH URBAN (Hit Red/Capitol Nashville/UMGN)	37	39	11	BISCUITS	KACEY MUSGRAVES (Mercury/UMGN)
13	16	9	LOVING YOU EASY	ZAC BROWN BAND (John Varvatos/Southern Ground/BMLG/Republic)	38	42	37	AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY	COLE SWINDELL (Warner Bros./WMN)
14	14	22	LITTLE TOY GUNS	CARRIE UNDERWOOD (19/Arista Nashville/SMN)	39	37	52	LEAVE THE NIGHT ON	SAM HUNT (MCA Nashville/UMGN)
15	19	15	ONE HELL OF AN AMEN	BRANTLEY GILBERT (Valory/BMLG)	40	36	6	YOUNG & CRAZY	FRANKIE BALLARD (Warner Bros./WMN)
16	12	21	SMOKE	A THOUSAND HORSES (Republic Nashville/BMLG)	41	41	80	PLAY IT AGAIN	LUKE BRYAN (Capitol Nashville/UMGN)
17	17	23	HOMEGROWN	ZAC BROWN BAND (John Varvatos/Southern Ground/BMLG/Republic)	42	NEW		STAY A LITTLE LONGER	BROTHERS OSBORNE (EMI Nashville/UMGN)
18	20	6	BREAK UP WITH HIM	OLD DOMINION (RCA Nashville/SMN)	43	45	5	FLY	MADDIE & TAE (Dot/BMLG)
19	15	17	SIPPIN' ON FIRE	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE (Republic Nashville/BMLG)	44	47	5	LET ME SEE YA GIRL	COLE SWINDELL (Warner Bros./WMN)
20	18	4	REAL LIFE	JAKE OWEN (RCA Nashville/SMN)	45	38	40	AMERICAN KIDS	KENNY CHESNEY (Blue Chair/Columbia Nashville/SMN)
21	22	6	I'M COMIN' OVER	CHRIS YOUNG (RCA Nashville/SMN)	46	44	82	THIS IS HOW WE ROLL	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. LUKE BRYAN (Republic Nashville/BMLG)
22	24	18	DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOL	TIM MCGRAW WITH CATHERINE DUNN (McGraw/Big Machine/BMLG)	47	46	154	CRUISE	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE (Republic Nashville/BMLG)
23	23	8	LOSE MY MIND	BRETT ELDRIDGE (Atlantic/WMN)	48	43	12	GOING OUT LIKE THAT	REBA (Starstruck/Nash Icon/BMLG)
24	25	9	KISS YOU IN THE MORNING	MICHAEL RAY (Warner Bros./WMN)	49	50	23	RISE	CHASE RICE (Dack Janiels)
25	26	13	BABY BE MY LOVE SONG	EASTON CORBIN (Mercury/UMGN)	50	RE-ENTRY		WAGON WHEEL	DARIUS RUCKER (Capitol Nashville/UMGN)

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BUILDING AIRPLAY GAINERS

TITLE Label	Artist	GAIN
DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOLS McGraw/Big Machine	Tim McGraw With Catherine Dunn	+381
TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+235
LITTLE TOY GUNS 19/Arista Nashville	Carrie Underwood	+234
JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16 Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	+225
LOVE YOU LIKE THAT Mercury	Canaan Smith	+221
GIRL CRUSH Capitol Nashville	Little Big Town	+186
LOSE MY MIND Atlantic/WMN	Brett Eldredge	+184
LONG STRETCH OF LOVE Capitol Nashville	Lady Antebellum	+137
ANYTHING GOES Republic Nashville	Florida Georgia Line	+128
SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY Blue Chair/Columbia Nashville	Kenny Chesney	+124

Building Gainers reflects titles with the top increases in plays from Monday through 5pm ET Wednesday, as compared to the same period in the previous week, according to Nielsen Music.